

**REPORT TO:** Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Children and Enterprise

**SUBJECT:** Basic Need Capital Allocation 2011/12

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report provides an update on the agreed basic needs capital projects for 2011/2012.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

**2.1 To recommend submission to Full Council for approval of the projects.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 In December 2010 the Department for Education announced the schools capital grant allocations for 2011/12 which included an allocation of £1,689,618 for Basic Need.

3.2 At the Executive Board meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011 approval was given for the development of capital projects to address basic need at Windmill Hill Primary School, Weston Primary School, Lunts Heath Primary School and St Bede's Catholic Infant and Junior Schools.

3.3 The Department for Education has allocated each local authority funding to address basic need. This funding has been allocated in recognition of the significant pressures local authorities are facing to provide additional school places, particularly in the primary sector. The additional pressure on primary places is largely as a result of the rising birth rates and the changed migration patterns.

3.4 Each LA has the responsibility for ensuring sufficient school places in its area and is required to consider all sectors of schools in prioritising this funding. All taxpayer-funded schools within each local authority are eligible for consideration; this includes voluntary-aided schools, open academies and new Free Schools where there are basic need pressures.

3.5 Following Executive Board on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011 meetings have been held with the schools and the position is summarised as follows:

### 3.5.1 Windmill Hill Primary School

The numbers on roll at Windmill Hill Primary School have been increasing in recent years and the school is now exceeding its current capacity in a number of year groups. The impact on the school will continue to worsen as the small current years 5 and 6 leave. In the short term there is an immediate need to address the current shortage of classrooms by providing an additional classroom for the current capacity of 147 pupils and then to increase capacity to 175 pupils by the provision of a further classroom to address future demand. Estimated cost £352,378.

### 3.5.2 Weston Primary School

This school accommodation has been rationalised over time to reduce the admission number from 30 to 15, as in previous years the school suffered from surplus capacity. Therefore it is possible to increase the school capacity from 105 to 140 by bringing back into use two classrooms without significant building works being required. Estimated cost £30,000.

### 3.5.3 Lunts Heath Primary School

Lunts Heath Primary School is undersized for the number of pupils currently on role. The current pupil numbers already place a significant strain on the schools accommodation and organisation and it is expected that this will worsen as the smaller current years 5 and 6 leave and with higher numbers admitted. A proposal to increase the capacity from 315 to 350 pupils would require two additional classrooms with the need also to increase the size of the hall which is considerably undersized for current pupil numbers. Estimated cost £772,650.

### 3.5.4 St Bede's Catholic Infant School and St Bede's Catholic Junior School

These are two catholic voluntary aided schools. In Widnes East this type of provision is extremely limited with all VA schools in Widnes East being at or near capacity and with the lower years currently exceeding capacity in all schools. This shortfall of catholic provision is an area of concern and has been subject to discussion with the Liverpool Archdiocese. A proposal to increase the planned admission number from 60 to 75 pupils will require two additional classrooms in the Infants School as a first priority and two additional classrooms in the Junior School at a later stage as a Phase 2 of works. It is expected the local authority will receive further Basic Need capital funding for 2012/13 which will fund the Phase 2 works (estimated cost £450,000). Estimated cost of Phase 1 works £550,000.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The school building projects will allow the Council to continue to meet its requirement to enhance the learning environment in schools and provide sufficient accommodation for increased pupil numbers by the creation of 29 additional places at reception age.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The school building projects to be funded from the capital programme will contribute to Halton's Carbon Management Programme by producing more energy efficient buildings.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

The capital programme will address the demand for pupil places by creating 29 additional pupil places and by addressing suitability issues within school buildings and will improve the learning environment for children and young people.

##### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

N/A.

##### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

N/A

##### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

N/A

##### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

The capital programme will ensure that there are sufficient pupil places across the authority.

#### **7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Basic Need capital allocation of £1,689,618 will be used to fund the works detailed above. It will be necessary to use the Basic Need capital allocation for 2012/13 to fund the Phase 2 works at St Bedes Junior School. Although schools prioritised for capital development will be asked to make a contribution towards the project as their devolved capital allocation has been reduced by the DFE the sum each school can contribute is likely to be very limited.

## **8.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

There are no risks associated with the recommendations put forward by this paper.

## **9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

9.1 Consideration to access issues is given in all building projects. The capacity of schools to meet the needs of children with more complex needs and disabilities will be developed further through building works at schools.

## **10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Schools Announcement – DCSF 13/12/2010	Capital Transforming Environments – Dee 2 – Grosvenor Runcorn	Childrens House Phil Dove